# Puerto Rico PTX DA

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### 1NC Shell—Zika Impact

#### Puerto Rico debt relief will pass, but it’s politically sensitive

**Timiraos 4-12**

Nick Timiraos (contributor). “Puerto Rico Governor Is Optimistic On Debt-Relief Bill.” Wall Street Journal. April 12th, 2016. http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2016/04/12/puerto-rico-governor-is-optimistic-on-debt-relief-bill/

Puerto Rico Gov. Alejandro García Padilla said he was optimistic Tuesday that Congress would pass legislation that would allow the island to restructure its debts, which he has said the island cannot afford to pay. A House committee is set to begin considering a bill on Wednesday that would create a federal oversight authority together with a debt-restructuring mechanism to consider any debt relief. It would also provide Puerto Rico with a temporary stay of creditor litigation. “Leaders on both sides of the aisle are committed to Puerto Rico. There is an emergency, and Congress will act,” said Mr. García Padilla, after meeting with lawmakers in Washington this week. He spoke with reporters shortly before the latest draft of the House bill was released. The legislation, which will be considered by the House Committee on Natural Resources, follows an unusually bipartisan process on a politically sensitive topic fraught with technical complexity. House Speaker Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) tasked the committee, which has oversight of U.S. territories, with taking the lead on legislation earlier this year.

#### Obama’s political capital is key

**Mufson 2-20**

Steven Mufson (staff writer). “Obama’s final year in office shaping up to be one of genuine relevance.” The Washington Post. February 20th, 2016. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/obamas-final-year-in-office-shaping-up-to-be-one-of-genuine-relevance/2016/02/20/7b047fee-d5c3-11e5-9823-02b905009f99_story.html>

It was not so long ago that many observers were arguing that it was time to slide Barack Obama’s presidency onto the bookshelf labeled “history.” The president’s political capital seemed spent, and the man himself seemed tired. He looked and sounded like a lame duck. Then, bam! A confluence of events has conspired to keep the president not just relevant but also vital, even as the campaign to replace him intensifies. The unexpected Supreme Court vacancy, a historic trip to Cuba and a deeply unsettled presidential primary campaign all promise to keep the president at the center of Washington politics and policy debate deep into his final year in office. The president seems to be relishing his continued place in the spotlight. He is doling out media interviews and holding forth at length on a wide range of topics. One moment, Obama is opining on Donald Trump’s odds of winning the election; another moment he is angling for a late-inning score on budget items and Puerto Rico debt restructuring; and another he is pondering a successor for the late Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia. And deploying a bit of sports jargon, he has said that lots of things can happen in the fourth quarter. Only recently, many people were writing him off. “He starts his last year with a key goal: remaining relevant,” Reuters wrote on the eve of the State of the Union address. “Obama Reaches for Relevance With $4.1 Trillion 2017 Budget,” said a Bloomberg News headline recently. “Obama’s presidency now effectively over,” said a Washington Times headline. And as long ago as 2014, a Washington Post writer declared that “all that appears left for the Obama presidency is a narrowing of both vision and accomplishment.” The White House insists that Obama still has some fight left in him.

**A handgun ban would destroy Obama’s political capital**

**Scher 15**

Bill Scher (senior writer, Campaign for America’s Future). “Will Any Presidential Candidate Support Banning Handguns?” Common Dreams. October 3rd, 2015. http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/10/03/will-any-presidential-candidate-support-banning-handguns

Politicians generally avoid proposing handgun bans because the position doesn’t fit into the frame of exempting “responsible gun owners” from new regulations. No one needs an assault rifle to hunt or to protect themselves. But plenty of Americans keep handguns thinking that it will protect them from harm. **Politicians are loathe to advocate that the government “take their guns away.”** However, the reality is, as physicist David Robert Grimes put it, “actually owning and using a firearm hugely increases the risk of being shot.” Of course, **this is a political impossibility** for the foreseeable future. The current Republican Congress won’t even pass an expansion of background checks, and a previous Republican Congress allowed the Clinton-era assault weapons ban to expire. A handgun ban also could run afoul of the Supreme Court, as it is currently constituted.

#### **Puerto Rico will default on May 1st—that kills efforts to fight the Zika virus—Puerto Rico is key**

Berquist 4-26

Evan Berquist (staff writer). “Time to Get Serious About Puerto Rico.” National Review. April 26th, 2016. <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/434547/puerto-ricos-financial-crisis-congress-must-act-now-pass-promesa>

On May 1, the pace of Puerto Rico’s financial and humanitarian crisis will pick up considerably, as a $423 million loan payment comes due to creditors. Puerto Rico’s Government Development Bank (GDB) — the island’s main financing vehicle — is expected to default rather than pay. This default will probably send shock waves through the island’s financial system and government and unleash a new wave of litigation against the GDB, as nervous creditors try to recoup their money. The effects of this default will be severe for Puerto Rico’s citizens and its creditors. The government depends on the GDB and a constant stream of new loans to finance its daily operations. If the GDB is unable to go back to the debt markets, the government will have little choice but to slash essential services such as police, firefighters, and hospitals. An already desperate situation on the island will become that much worse. Even after the May 1 default, there will be no clear path ahead for the island or its creditors. Because of Puerto Rico’s status as a commonwealth, it does not have the ability to put its municipalities or other debt-issuing entities (of which there are 18) into bankruptcy. Instead, all of the island’s creditors will exercise whatever remedies they have under the terms of their agreements. The unfolding litigation in Puerto Rico’s courts will be nothing less than chaos. To its credit, under the leadership of Speaker Paul Ryan, Republican members of the Committee on Natural Resources in the House of Representatives have been working diligently to put new legislation in place before the crisis on May 1. It now seems highly unlikely that Congress will pass a law before then. The draft legislation released by the House Committee — H.R. 4900, or PROMESA (Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stabilization Act) — has met opposition from diverse groups including Senate Republicans, the White House, members of Congress from both parties, and certain financial institutions. Some of the opposition to the bill is legitimate. For example, as Senator Orrin Hatch has argued, the bill must do more to protect the guarantees made to certain senior debtholders. The three most commonly heard objections to the bill are that it amounts to a “bailout,” that it is an unacceptable intrusion on Puerto Rico’s sovereignty, and that American voters on the mainland have little reason to care about events in Puerto Rico. Each of these is mistaken. While imperfect, PROMESA largely fulfills what Ryan called Congress’s “constitutional and financial responsibility to bring order to the chaos unfolding in Puerto Rico.” Congress should revise the parts of PROMESA that need fixing but retain much of the bill’s fundamental character. And it must do so quickly, because time is running out. 1. First, this is not a bailout. Opponents of PROMESA (the acronym means “promise” in Spanish) have attempted to label it a “bailout” of Puerto Rico. This is a dishonest characterization that could hardly be further from the truth. The bill commits zero taxpayer dollars to pay back Puerto Rico’s obligations or its creditors. The House bill commits zero taxpayer dollars to pay back Puerto Rico’s obligations or its creditors. What PROMESA will do is establish a new federal oversight board for Puerto Rico, loosely modeled on the board that Congress set up for Washington, D.C., in the 1990s, when that city was financially insolvent. The board’s key powers would be to 1) to impose fiscal discipline and transparency on spending decisions and 2) impose mandatory restructuring plans for Puerto Rico’s $72 billion of debt. Both of these are sorely needed. As Ryan has argued, this legislation is likely our country’s best hope of avoiding an expensive bailout later on. If Congress does nothing now, and Puerto Rico is plunged into a full-blown crisis, the federal government will have little choice but to intervene. Our government will not stand by and watch as events on the island become much worse. Congress can either act now to bring some order to the chaos, or face a much more costly intervention down the road. A related objection to these “bailout” concerns has been expressed by conservative lawmakers who worry that the legislation would serve as a precedent for other financially troubled states, such as California or Illinois. This argument ignores the crucial difference between Puerto Rico and U.S. states. States are protected from federal government interference by the Tenth and Eleventh Amendments. Puerto Rico, as a U.S. territory, enjoys no such protections. The federal oversight board applied to Puerto Rico would never pass constitutional muster if applied to a U.S. state. 2. Second, the bill strikes an appropriate balance between the need for oversight and concerns about Puerto Rico’s sovereignty. Some members of Congress object to the plan because it interferes with Puerto Rico’s ability to govern itself. Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez called the bill “insulting,” saying it treats Puerto Rico as if it is “a colony in the Caribbean.” Both practically and legally, this position is untenable. The bill has the tentative support of the two highest-ranking elected officials in Puerto Rico’s government: Governor Alejandro Garcia-Padilla and Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi, Puerto Rico’s non-voting member of Congress. Both officials signaled that they generally supported the latest version of PROMESA, after rejecting an earlier draft that took too much power away from San Juan. More fundamentally, these objections are out of touch with the reality of Puerto Rico’s legal status. For more than 100 years, beginning with the so-called Insular Cases, the Supreme Court has held that the Territory Clause of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the right to legislate for Puerto Rico. Found in Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution, the clause provides that “Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.” In lay terms, this means that Congress has power to govern Puerto Rico as essentially a territorial possession of the U.S., acquired in the Spanish-American War. (The technical word for Puerto Rico’s status is either a “commonwealth” or a “free associated state.”) Although Congress granted citizenship to Puerto Ricans and introduced a modicum of self-government in 1917 and 1953, the ultimate sovereign of Puerto Rico is still the U.S. Congress. To be sure, this arrangement is both anachronistic and embarrassing. For the U.S. to govern Puerto Rico as essentially another modern-day colony in the year 2016 is almost incredible. But the only real solution to this problem is to redefine the political status of Puerto Rico. This is a long-term process that has vexed policymakers for years. One hopes that Congress takes up that process soon with renewed vigor and urgency. But that task should not deter Congress from addressing the immediate emergency before it. 3. Third, this bill reflects the solidarity and interconnectedness between Puerto Rico and the United States. Many lawmakers might ask why their constituents should care about what happens in Puerto Rico. Here are just a few of the vital connections binding Puerto Rico and the United States. The Centers for Disease Control calls Puerto Rico the front lines of the Zika virus in the U.S., estimating that infection levels on the island could hit 80 percent within the year. Puerto Rico’s high poverty rate, tropical climate, and deteriorating public services have all contributed to the virus’s rapid spread. Imagine how much worse the situation could become for both Puerto Rico and the U.S. if the island’s health-care system and economy were to collapse entirely. The U.S. should do all it can to shore up Puerto Rico’s essential services. Anything less would jeopardize the health of our citizens on the mainland and in Puerto Rico.

#### Zika will interact with alien DNA raining down from space—scientists agree—that risks extinction

**Rao 3-1**

\*\*Cites Professor Chandra Wickramasinghe, of the University of Buckingham, and Professor Milton Wainwright and his team at the University of Sheffield and the University of Buckingham Centre for Astrobiology

Nathan Rao (staff writer). “'Alien DNA' raining down on Earth could mix with Zika virus to create super disease.” Irish Mirror. March 1st, 2016. <http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/weird-news/alien-dna-raining-down-earth-7470447?ICID=ref_fark>

Genetic material falling on Earth from outer space could create a supercharged version of the Zika virus, scientists have warned. Experts claim that the virus, which is spreading across the globe, will become more prevalent and deadly in the future. Changes in Zika have already been noted, as it's changed to be passable through sexual contact. The disease, first discovered in monkeys in 1947, had previously only been transferable by mosquito bite. But now, scientists are warning that it could mutate, growing stronger and spreading more easily - with its victims suffering more serious consequences. They have warned that future strains could become worse thanks to panspermia - the theory of genetic material constantly raining down on Earth from outer space. This could be the reason the virus has in the past couple of months developed the ability to spread via sexual contact, experts say. Professor Chandra Wickramasinghe, of the University of Buckingham, has long held panspermia as a common route of viral and bacterial mutation. Worryingly, he said, is the apparent ability of the Zika virus to pick up foreign DNA and adapt quickly to become more virulent. Once taken up by the killer germ - which causes fever, rash and sometimes death - this piece of genetic code can mutate further making it more dangerous. Professor Wickramasinghe said: "We believe this has already happened with the Zika virus. "This we have seen by its sudden ability to be passed on by sexual contact suggesting it has taken up an entirely new piece of genetic code. "The virus replicates and makes further copies of itself, with each time there is an opportunity for a mistake or change to be made in this sequence. "This will add new characteristics to the virus, and it will keep happening as the virus evolves. "It could certainly become more easily transmissible with dramatic changes to its characteristics." Zika is not the only infectious pathogen thought to be altered by panspermia with sudden outbreaks of disease blamed on the phenomenon. Professor Wickramasinghe said the current crisis shows terrifying signs of escalating out of control and even threatening the future of humanity. He said: "Evidence is mounting that through this process benign viruses and bacteria have the potential to become harmful. "It is not just the Zika virus, there are more viruses on the planet than any other living creature and these could all could be affected. "Unless this is taken seriously the future of humanity is threatened." Some scientists believe panspermia is in continual action with reams of alien DNA showering down from space. Previous research by Professor Milton Wainwright and his team at the University of Sheffield and the University of Buckingham Centre for Astrobiology appears to back the theory. Professor Wainwright sent balloons into the stratosphere where dust allowed to settle on their surface was shown to contain genetic material. He said collection equipment was sent high enough above the atmosphere for it to impossible for this DNA to have originated from Earth. Tiny dents made on the balloons were deep enough to conclude they must have fallen from much further out in space. Professor Wainwright has previously isolated mysterious life-like forms including the ghost particle, dragon particle and a strange metallic sphere believed to be a seed. "On hitting the stratosphere sampler the sphere made an impact crater, a minute version of the huge impact crater on Earth caused by the asteroid said to have killed off the dinosaurs. "This impact crater proves that the sphere was incoming to Earth from space, an organism coming from Earth would not be travelling fast enough when it fell back to Earth to cause such damage. "This seems never before to have been found on Earth." Professor Edward Steele, biologist and immunologist the CY O'Connor ERADE Village Foundation in Australia said: "Over the past two decades there has been a growing recognition that horizontal gene transfer, via the agency of viruses, might play a key role in evolution. "The process of horizontal gene transfer should be extended well outside our planets biosphere. With current estimates of over 100 billion habitable planets in our galaxy alone such an extension, admitting the concepts of panspermia, would seem entirely reasonable. "Over the past decade there has been growing evidence for microorganisms currently entering the stratosphere of the Earth. Ignoring this possibility of a continuing input of microbial and viral genes to the Earth from the external universe might be fraught with imminent danger.

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#### Debt crisis harms the Puerto Rican economy—that spills over to international markets

**Linshi 15**

Jack Linshi (staff writer). “Everything You Should Know About Puerto Rico’s Economic Crisis.” TIME. June 29th, 2015. http://time.com/3939792/puerto-rico-debt/

As Greece grapples with the fallout from its debt crisis, another territory much closer to home — Puerto Rico — has admitted to some major financial woes. The island, which for years has struggled to repay its massive debt, defaulted on Monday for the first time when it failed to repay a $58 million loan, placing the future of the U.S. territory’s economy further in jeopardy. So what exactly is happening in Puerto Rico? In late June, Puerto Rico Governor Alejandro García Padilla made a worrisome announcement that the island cannot pay back its $72 billion in public debt, the New York Times reported. Padilla and his staff, according to the Times, said they were seeking to defer debt payments for as long as five years, while also possibly seeking concessions from many of its creditors. “The debt is not payable,” García Padilla said at the time. “There is no other option. I would love to have an easier option. This is not politics, this is math.” Okay… in English, please? Puerto Rico is in the midst of a decades-long economic struggle fueled by years of recession and slow economic growth. As a result, its government has taken out massive loans from creditors to cover its costs. But Puerto Rico has to pay back the money (or figure out a Plan B). In recent years, the commonwealth has raised taxes and slashed pensions in order to pay back its loans, but the island’s “tab,” so to speak, has still spiraled out of control. Many residents have found their businesses collapsing — Puerto Rico’s unemployment rate is double that of mainland America — while others have been leaving the island for better opportunities state-side. Financial markets across the world have already been rocked by Greece’s debt crisis, and Puerto Rico’s troubles will only add to the current global economic uncertainty. What’s the deal with Puerto Rico defaulting? Puerto Rico paid only $628,000 of a $58 million loan due Monday, claiming its legislature would not release the funds. The move ratchets up the standoff between the island’s government and its creditors, increasing pressure on those who are owed money — mostly big bondholders such as hedge funds — to agree to a significant debt restructuring of the island’s $72 billion debt. One of the biggest credit agencies, Moody’s, said Monday that it believes this default will be the first of many. “This event is consistent with our belief that Puerto Rico does not have the resources to make its forthcoming debt payments,” Moody’s vice president Emily Raimes said in a statement. “This is the first of what we believe will be broad defaults on commonwealth debt.” What does this mean for Americans? If you’re an investor in municipal bond funds, Puerto Rico’s debt might be your problem, too. Municipal bonds — or loans used by local governments to fund public projects — have traditionally been considered safe investments. But some investors are worried about them — several American cities have filed for bankruptcy in recent years, and the Puerto Rico situation could make things worse. According to the Washington Post, as many as three out of four municipal bond mutual funds held Puerto Rican bonds in 2013. How bad is the situation exactly? Padilla called the situation a “death spiral.” And he wasn’t exaggerating: Puerto Rico’s debt is four times that of Detroit’s, and the island has more debt per capita than any American state. If the central government runs out of cash, according to the Wall Street Journal, a government shutdown, emergency measures and an unpredictable crisis could follow.

#### Economic decline causes extinction

Kemp 10

Geoffrey Kemp, Director of Regional Strategic Programs at The Nixon Center, served in the White House under Ronald Reagan, special assistant to the president for national security affairs and senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs on the National Security Council Staff, Former Director, Middle East Arms Control Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010, “The East Moves West: India, China, and Asia’s Growing Presence in the Middle East”, p. 233-4

The second scenario, called Mayhem and Chaos, is the opposite of the first scenario; everything that can go wrong does go wrong. The world economic situation weakens rather than strengthens, and India, China, and Japan suffer a major reduction in their growth rates, further weakening the global economy. As a result, energy demand falls and the price of fossil fuels plummets, leading to a financial crisis for the energy-producing states, which are forced to cut back dramatically on expansion programs and social welfare. That in turn leads to political unrest: and nurtures different radical groups, including, but not limited to, Islamic extremists. The internal stability of some countries is challenged, and there are more “failed states.” Most serious is the collapse of the democratic government in Pakistan and its takeover by Muslim extremists, who then take possession of a large number of nuclear weapons. The danger of war between India and Pakistan increases significantly. Iran, always worried about an extremist Pakistan, expands and weaponizes its nuclear program. That further enhances nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, with Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt joining Israel and Iran as nuclear states. Under these circumstances, the potential for nuclear terrorism increases, and the possibility of a nuclear terrorist attack in either the Western world or in the oil-producing states may lead to a further devastating collapseof the world economic market, with a tsunami-like impact on stability. In this scenario, major disruptions can be expected**,** with dire consequences for two-thirds of the planet’s population.